

2-1972

Gritchenko

La Salle University Art Museum

S. Hordynsky

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/exhibition_catalogues



Part of the [Fine Arts Commons](#), and the [History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

La Salle University Art Museum and Hordynsky, S., "Gritchenko" (1972). *Art Museum Exhibition Catalogues*. 107.
http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/exhibition_catalogues/107

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the La Salle University Art Museum at La Salle University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Art Museum Exhibition Catalogues by an authorized administrator of La Salle University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact careyc@lasalle.edu.



GRITCHENKO

La Salle College

Philadelphia

La Salle College

Philadelphia

February 27 - March 5

1972

**ALEXIS
GRITCHENKO**

RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBIT

**under the auspices
of
CHRISTINA CZORPITA GALLERY**

Preview: Sunday, February 27, 1972

at 2pm

ALEXIS GRITCHENKO

In the first and second decades of our century Paris became the Mecca for young and striving East-European artists. In their native countries they were satiated with academic art which rarely took into consideration the previous pictorial tradition and the colorful imagery of folk art, and they saw on the Paris horizons the gleam of new trends. Impressionism was already a consummated style, Cezanne had long ago decomposed the object into a correlation of forms, lines, colors and facture, and now it became possible to create art without copying nature or repeating the old formulas.

The modern art was born, and many of the newcomers became its co-creators: Archipenko and Brancusi, Chagall and Soutine, Malevich and Gontcharova. In this group of East-European newcomers was also Gritchenko.

He was at once attracted by the Cubism and the Constructivism, and his interest in these trends went parallel with his discovery of the art of old icons. For him there was no disparity between the modern and the old icon art: the modern artist wanted to be free in his creation of form and color, and the Byzantine painter was compelled to be inventive in this direction, as he was limited by a dogma-prescribed subject. For Gritchenko, they both expressed themselves in terms of a certain order of forms and colors directed by their feeling of rhythm and harmony. To discover this meant to find the essential principles governing true art of all ages.

However, Gritchenko's crusade against the dead schemes of realistic and academic art and his enthusiasm for the new one, manifested in his articles and pamphlets, happily kept him away from any scheme or doctrine in his own painting. Nature still gave him his strongest impulses, and he never became an abstractionist. Certainly, his post-cubist period, in which

he painted the minarets and bazaars of Constantinople and the "purple sea" of Homer, was his heroic period, but he must have noticed that the cubist painting, in the works of his contemporaries, leads straight toward a geometrical decoration without deeper spiritual content. This is why around 1924 Gritchenko started to reorient his art more toward Expressionism, and this brought him close to the then young Ecole de Paris. His color became spontaneous and dynamic, able to render all the finesse of an inspired feeling. In 1926 Louis Vauxcelles, then the leading French art critic, was one of the first to notice "the whirlwinds of lyrical pleasure" emanating from Gritchenko's paintings, and he stated that "the young Ukrainian colorist conquered Paris."

This imaginative lyricism was the leading element in his art for subsequent decades. Behind all his paintings, regardless of their quality, there is always an animated, spontaneous, vital experience of an artist for whom his painting was a part of his existence. This also could explain the impact he exerts on numerous enthusiasts of his art. In a time when we often see around us too much art based on dehumanized schemes, Gritchenko's painting reminds us that art is before an expression of life.

* * * * *

Alexis Grichenko was born in Krolevets, Northern Ukraine, in 1883. He studied philosophy and biology at Kiev, St. Petersburg and Moscow universities, but at the same time he became interested in painting. He played an important role in the modern art movement of the former Russian empire, and he was close to the famous art collectors Stchukin and Morozoff. Before the First World War he visited Paris and became an enthusiast of modern painting, especially Cubism. He published several books, the most important of which were his studies of old icons.

After the revolution, unable to return to war-ravaged Ukraine, he went through Crimea to Constantinople. Here he painted several hundred water colors which soon made his name famous in the artistic world of the twenties. Thomas Whittemore of Boston, the restorer of Hagia Sophia, acquired 66 of these paintings. This enabled Gritchenko to make an excursion to Greece and later to Paris where he exhibited at the Salon d'Automn 12 of his Constantinople works, chosen by Fernand Leger. In 1923 the American collector, Dr. Albert Barnes acquired 17 of his paintings which are now in the famous Barnes Museum in Merion, Pennsylvania.

After 1924 Gritchenko settled in Southern France. From there he made frequent trips to Spain, Portugal, Italy, England and Scandinavian countries, and exhibited in leading Paris galleries. In 1937 he had a one-man show in the Ukrainian Museum of Lviv (Lvov) where his first Ukrainian monograph also appeared. A French-English monograph was published in Paris in 1948, and another in 1964.

In the mid-fifties Gritchenko's works in the Ukrainian Museum in Lviv were destroyed by the Soviet commissars as "not corresponding to the socialist-realistic style."

In 1958 a retrospective show of Gritchenko's works was organized at the Ukrainian Institute of America in New York. Soon after this the artist donated 72 of his works to the Gritchenko Foundation, located at that Institute. Two other American shows of his works followed: at the Community Art Gallery in Philadelphia, 1964, and at Peter Deitsch Gallery in New York, 1967.

Besides painting, Gritchenko is the author of several books, mainly artistic memoirs in French and Ukrainian, which also won him fame as an outstanding writer.

S. Hordynsky

CATALOGUE

Oils

1. Portrait of the Artist, 1923
2. Large Marine (Salon d'Automne, 1946)
3. Oblong Marine
4. Veiled Turkish Woman, 1920
5. Artist's Studio, 1923
- ✓ 6. Rain Over St. Sophia, 1920
9. White Castle (Roquebrune)
10. View of Alps from Cagnes
11. Buckwheat Field, Limusin
12. Interior of the Prato Cathedral
13. Saw-Fishes, 1926
14. Old Toulon, 1926
15. Marine of Brittany
16. "L'arbre de Judas," 1963
17. Coimbra, University, 1926
18. Sardines from Toulon, 1926
19. Basque Coast, 1944

Gouaches (Istanbul, 1919-1920, Greece 1920-1923)

20. City Walls, Constantinople, 1921
21. Ruins of the Castle of Godefroy de Bouillon (Corinth)
22. Ruins of a Palace, Mistra
23. Landscape, Mistra
24. Outskirts of Corinth ✓
25. Turks
26. Card Players
27. The Church of Daphni

Water Colors

28. A "Cafedji"
29. Turk in Cafe
30. Ramparts with Cypressess

31. A Ketybe in St. Sophia
32. Mistra, Greece
33. Greek Church
34. The Parthenon
35. Baker's Oven
36. Turk with Narghille
37. Mistra

Nos. 13, 14 and 35 are from the collection of Mr. and Mrs.
Augustin Sumyk, N.Y., N.Y.

Nos. 15 and 16 are from the collection of Dr. and Mrs.
Hilary Cholhan, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Nos. 17, 25, 26, 27, 36 and 37 are from the collection of
Mr. and Mrs. Sviatoslav Hodrynsky, Verona, N.J.

Nos. 18 and 19 are from the collection of Mr. and Mrs.
Stephen Czorpita, Philadelphia, Pa.

No. 20 is from the collection of Orest Dutka

The remaining works are the property of the
Alexis Gritchenko Foundation, Inc., at the
Ukrainian Institute of America,
2 East 79th Street, New York, N.Y.

EXHIBITIONS

Moscow, 1919. Athens, 1921. Paris, Gallery Povolotzky, 1922.
Athens, Museum of Byzantine Art, 1923, Paris, Gallery Dominique,
1923. Percier, 1924. Bing, 1926. Katia Granoff, 1926. Van
Leer, 1927. Druet, 1929, 1930, 1933. Madrid, 1934. Barcelona,
Sala Pares, 1935. Stockholm, 1937. Goteborg, 1937. Lviv (Lvov),
1937. Limoges, 1943, 1944. Paris, Gallery Parville, 1945.
De l'Elysée, 1947. Casablanca, 1947. Fez, 1947. Paris, Andre
Weil, 1950. Bernheim Jeune, 1957. New York, 1958, Museum of
Cagnes, 1960. Galerie d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1962. Philadelphia,
1964. New York, 1967.